

Press Release



Embassy of the United States of America
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
2013/

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<http://ethiopia.usembassy.gov>

U.S. GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES NEW LAND ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM TO IMPROVE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY

Thursday, June 27, 2013, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia – Sileshi Getahun, State Minister of Agriculture, and Dennis Weller, Mission Director of USAID Ethiopia, officially launched the “Land Administration to Nurture Development” (LAND) program today at a national conference in Addis Ababa. The program builds on previous USAID land projects and will reach more regions than before.

In two previous USAID and Ministry of Agriculture projects carried out from 2005-2013, farmers in selected pilot test regions benefited from greater transparency and predictability regarding land use through land mapping with GIS technology, the issuance of land certificates, and the development of land laws and local systems to resolve land disputes. As a result, the farmers, including women food producers, invested more in the land and productivity increased. The new LAND initiative builds on the lessons learned and progress achieved under these two previous projects and will focus on the Amhara, Afar, Oromia, Tigray, Somali, and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples regions.

The Ministry of Agriculture and technical experts from LAND will work with the Ethiopian Mapping Agency and rural land administration agencies of the six regional states mentioned above to strengthen their land governance and administration practices and policies. The three key areas of focus are: 1) improve legal and regulatory frameworks for rural land tenure and property rights, bolster the skills of judges, and expand educational programs on land management; 2) strengthen the governance of land including land use planning, leasing, and dispute resolution and training for regional surveyors; and 3) enhance communal land management and use rights, including water, for pastoral and agro-pastoral communities to improve linkages with markets, diversify assets and promote improved livelihoods.

LAND will also improve policies and practices for the conservation of natural resources and equitable access to land for women and rural youth. Achievement of these goals will contribute to Ethiopia’s implementation of the UN Committee for World Food Security’s “Voluntary Guidelines for the Tenure of Land Fisheries and Forests.”

USAID Mission Director Dennis Weller discussed the strategic importance of land management to national development at the event: “Transparent and well-planned administration of land is critical to investments in food production, to equitable growth in the agriculture sector, to conservation of natural resources, and, last but not least, to peace and progress for the vast number of Ethiopian women and men who reside and work in rural areas.”

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Under the U.S. President's Feed the Future initiative, the LAND project is implemented by TetraTech-Associates in Rural Development with local partners including Haramaya and Bahir Dar Universities. It has an estimated value of 11 million USD.

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